NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

FENCE

(Ft)

CODE 382

DEFINITION

A constructed barrier to livestock, wildlife, or people.

PURPOSE

Applicable purposes include, but are not limited to:

- Improve distribution and timing of livestock grazing
- Reduce erosion and improve water quality by controlling livestock access to streams, springs, wetlands, and ponds
- Facilitate handling, movement, and feeding of livestock in a pasture environment
- Protect newly planted areas from disturbance until established
- Protect sensitive environmental areas and their flora from vehicular, pedestrian, or animal traffic and use.
- Protect the safety or people, livestock, and wildlife by limiting or denying access to hazardous areas.

CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice may be applied on any area where access management is needed. Fences are not needed where natural barriers will serve the purpose.

CRITERIA

GENERAL CRITERIA

Fencing materials shall be of a quality and durability that meets the intended management objectives. Construction shall be performed in a manner that meets the intended management objective. Wire and hardware will be new, galvanized material.

All fences shall consist of acceptable fencing designs to meet the intended purpose and life of the practice.

Height, number, and spacing of wires will be installed to facilitate control and management of the animal(s) and people of concern.

Height, size, spacing, and type of posts will be used that best provides the needs for the style of fence required and is best suited for the topography of the landscape.

Manufacturer's guidelines shall be adhered to during installation of each type of fence to ensure proper component assembly.

All fence construction shall comply with federal, state and local fencing codes.

Additional Criteria

Non-electric standard woven and barbed wire - See Appendix 1.

High tensile electric, high tensile non-electric, light weight high tensile, high tensile for deer control - See FOTG Agronomy References – High-Tensile Wire Fencing and Max-Fence Systems.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

NRCS, NHCP **NRCS, WV**

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Electroplastic twine (polywire) and electrified ribbon fencing - See Appendix 2.

Board fence - See Appendix 3.

Chain Link and ornamental fencing – Install according to manufacturers recommendations.

Legal fence – See Appendix 4.

CONSIDERATIONS

Fences across gullies or streams require special braces and designs. Breakaway fences or swinging water gaps allow debris and water to flow past the fence line without destroying the fence adjacent to the stream or gully. Swinging water gaps or floating water gaps should span running streams.

Any permanent fencing for grazing livestock should allow flexibility to facilitate implementation of the grazing plan and permit land management activities such as nutrient application, pest control, forage harvest, and other appropriate practices.

Follow all manufacturers' safety precautions for handling and installing fencing materials. Place warning signs on electric fences every 150 to 200 feet, wherever the public is expected to encounter the fence.

Wire should be attached on the side of posts that will receive the greatest pressure from animals. Wire will be placed on the outside of posts on curves.

Locate fences to facilitate maintenance. Where applicable, clear right of ways should be established and maintained to facilitate fence construction and maintenance.

When possible, install fences across slopes to improve grazing distribution, rainfall infiltration, and reduce soil erosion.

Locate fences to facilitate livestock management, handling, watering, and feeding.

Remove temporary fence during non-grazing season to minimize flood or deer damage.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications are to be prepared for specific sites. Plans and specifications for installing fences shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

The following specifications will be documented in the conservation plan narrative and/or the contract narrative.

1. Type of fence
2. Strands of fence (if applicable)
3. Type and size of fence posts
4. Spacing of fence posts
5. Length of fence
6. O&M practices

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Regular inspection of fences should be part of an on-going management program. Inspection of fences after storm events is needed to facilitate the function of the intended use of the fence. For electrified fence, use a voltage tester to ensure adequate charge is being maintained along the entire fence span. Keep heavy vegetation away from fences, especially electric fences to avoid loss of charge.

Maintenance and repairs will be performed as needed. Retain and properly discard of all broken fencing material and hardware to prevent ingestion by animals or injury to equipment, people, or animals. Precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of construction and maintenance crews.

REFERENCES

1. High Tensile Wire Fencing; Cooperative Extension Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service, NRAES – 11. September, 1987.

2. Max – Fence Systems; MFB, West Virginia Fence Corporation, Lindside, WV. 1998.

3. Fast Fence; WV Fence Corporation. 1996.

4. Laws of West Virginia Relating to Agriculture; Issued by West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Charleston, WV. 1996.